



## **Recommended Qualifications and Guidelines for Use of Translators and Language Interpreters (non-ASL) for the M-STEP and MI-Access Assessments**

The *Michigan Student Supports and Accommodations Table* provides information regarding the allowable linguistic supports for many students. A separate document identifies recommendations for American Sign Language, Signed Exact English, and cued English. This document is intended to help districts in selecting highly qualified translators or interpreters to administer the Michigan assessments.

Below is a list of available supports related to the use of interpreters and translators:

### ***M-STEP***

***For students taking the online M-STEP Math assessment, a set of translated directions is available in the following languages and should be used instead of on-the-spot translations: Arabic, Cantonese, Ilokano, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog, Russian, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.***

For students whose primary language is other than one of those listed above, it is strongly recommended that the recommendations included in this document be followed.

*Math:* Directions and items may be translated. In addition to the translated directions noted above, students needing a Spanish form of the assessment should order the Spanish test booklet or have the Spanish version turned “On” in eDirect.

*ELA:* Directions only may be translated.

*Science:* Directions and items may be translated. Students needing a Spanish or Arabic form of the assessment should order the Spanish or Arabic DVD.

*Social Studies:* Directions and items may be translated. Students needing a Spanish or Arabic form of the assessment should order the Spanish or Arabic DVD.

### ***MI-Access Functional Independence***

*Math:* Directions and items may be translated.

*ELA:* Directions only may be translated.

*Science:* Directions and items may be translated.



*Social Studies:* Directions and items may be translated.

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**ALL students using this support must have it bubbled on their answer document or identified within eDirect as a support that was used during testing.**

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### **Recommended Qualifications for Translators and Language Interpreters (non-ASL)**

Preference should be given to individuals with Bachelor's degrees in languages other than English or who hold a formal certification in either translation or interpretation. When this is not possible, interpreters should have the following qualifications:

1. Mastery of the target language and dialect
2. Familiarity with both American culture and the culture of the target language
3. Extensive general and academic vocabulary in both languages
4. Ability to express thoughts clearly and concisely in both languages
5. Familiarity with the Michigan education system
6. Have attended school/district/statewide trainings regarding how to administer the assessments
7. Have signed the OSA Security Compliance form

Individuals selected as interpreters must also adhere to all aspects of Michigan's test security guidelines.

### **Guidelines for Translators and Language Interpretation (non-ASL)**

Test directions, questions, and answer choices should be read to students using direct interpretation. Care should be taken not to alter the intended meaning of the text.



## Common False Assumptions and Risks

1. *Many people incorrectly assume that a bilingual person can also be an effective interpreter by virtue of knowing two languages.*

Research shows that bilingual individuals who have not received interpreter-specific training are more likely to add or omit information, as well as interject their own opinions and assumptions, which all has the result of changing the actual content of the assessment. They may also speak too quickly, making the content too difficult to process. These actions would affect the validity of the student's assessment results.

2. *Parents and family members of the students are the best choice to help administer the assessment.*

Using interpreters or translators with whom the student has familiar relationships may create a risk in creating a situation where the translator or interpreter is more willing to provide additional, non-authorized help to the student for the test.

Often times, in districts where there is a low population of language speaking students, districts may believe it would be acceptable to use a student's older sibling to aid in the translation process. This would actually result in a security breach as no students should be involved in the testing of other students.

3. *Side conversations*

It is possible that due to the one-on-one nature of this testing scenario for students coupled with the potential relief some students may feel by having someone speak to them in their native language that additional topics may arise for discussion between the student and the interpreter. Although it is acceptable for the student to ask for clarification on directions, other non-test related topics should be avoided.



## References

Bridging the Gap: A Basic Training for Medical Interpreters. Interpreter's Handbook, Third Edition, Jan. 1999.

[ITC Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests](#), International Test Commission, Jul. 2005.

Medical Interpreter Training. Arlington Free Clinic, Arlington, VA, Jan., 2000.

[National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey \(NHANES\) Interpretation Guidelines](#), Center for Disease Control (CDC), Nov. 2006.

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014.